

Detailed information from the 2024 Board of Trustee applicants:

Simon Gleisner

Why are you interested in the role of Director and Trustee?

As current Chairman of SLT, I have played a major role in creating the new organisational structure that we are now looking to fill. So, as well as wishing to continue to play a central role in the life of SLT, I feel it is important to keep an element of continuity as we implement these changes. SLT has been an important part of my life for the last 20 years, and I want to make sure it has a brilliant future ahead of it.

Relevant Experience

I have been the Chairman of SLT for five years and was elected to General Council first in 2018. I have led GC through tough times during the pandemic, and am delighted that we are back to being such a healthy and vibrant community once again. And I think that now is the right time to make changes for our future. With time on Theatre Committee as well as Chairman, I think I am well placed to take on the role of Theatre Director as we move to our new structure.

Geraldine McAndrew OBE

Why are you interested in the role of Director and Trustee?

My introduction to SLT was auditioning for Jesus Christ Superstar. I was so pleased to be accepted as part of the chorus. I enjoyed the spirit and enthusiasm of the members of the cast and others supporting the show. Following that, a short spell of helping out in the Box Office confirmed for me the importance of my ongoing membership which has now been, for over 9 years. I graduated to being a Trustee of BPT for 5 years, taking the lead strategic responsibility for Safeguarding. Recently I have chaired the SLT/BPT Governance Group overseeing the proposed structural changes and would welcome the opportunity to participate in establishing the new structure and the ongoing development of the theatre.

Relevant Experience

My career for over 25 years was in the voluntary sector, where I was C.E.O. of two large UK Charities. I have also been trustee and chair of many other charities within the UK and internationally. During these years I gained a lot of insight into and knowledge of, what is required to demonstrate good governance and leadership of organisations and in particular the importance of meeting the statutory requirements of the government and regulatory bodies. I have been exposed to many challenges; these include strategic planning, financial control, growth and development, and the management of people. I have learnt how important an inclusive, collaborative and collegiate approach is, in establishing a happy, thriving and successful organisation.

Alongside this experience, because of my senior management background in local authority Children's Services, I have a great depth of knowledge and skills with regard to Safeguarding requirements in the management of organisations, which is easily transferable to the theatre.

Marysia Skwarka

Why are you interested in the role of Director and Trustee?

I'm passionate about theatre, and in particular community theatre, since it makes theatre for everyone; it's more accessible than the average West End show. People can experience the richness and joy of theatre on a regular basis – either to watch or join in.

Having been a member of the South London Theatre since 2021, performed in 3 productions and watched many others; I see this as is great opportunity to become a core part of the SLT community, collaborate with other members and help the theatre thrive. I'm interested in the long-term future of SLT and its strategic direction, keen to seek ways to innovate and improve SLT – to keep it moving forward into the future and tackle barriers to further success.

This trusteeship offers a great opportunity to develop my strategic and leadership skills and experience – something I'm keen to develop to support my professional development. In my work life, I'm interested in moving towards a leadership role within the arts sector, and so this offers a great chance to learn and grow in that direction.

Relevant Experience

Directing & production experience

- Directed, co-produced, co-wrote and performed as compere for annual awards show at King's College London, with a professional AV team at the Greenwood Theatre for an audience for around 500, every July from 2022 to 2024.
- Co-wrote & co-produced performance for the Camden Fringe Festival in 2019.
- MA in Acting: During my degree (completed 2022), alongside performance, I directed, produced and wrote public performances, including one performance piece devised in response to collections and the history of the UCL Art Museum and Petrie Museum, performed on site in the Art Museum.

Performance experience

- 3 Productions at the South London Theatre since 2021
- Devised play for the Camden Fringe Festival in 2019
- Community theatre play at King's College London in 2018
- Performed in chorus within professionally produced musical at Waterloo East Theatre in 2016
- Member of a show choir for the past 10 years, performing in a series of public performances annually, including at high profile venues such as Cadogan Hall and Disneyland Paris.

Education & training

In 2022, I completed my MA in Acting. My master's program provided an in-depth study of various performance practices and expanded my knowledge of theatre-making, professional navigation, and industry challenges.

For my dissertation, I explored integrating theatre-making methodologies into workplace training, focusing on team building, communication, and leadership skills. I designed and delivered workshops applicable to any sector, fostering empathy, trust, observation, and conflict resolution through role play.

This experience highlights my research skills, innovative thinking, and artistic design, alongside my ability to collaborate with others on artistic projects. It also deepened my understanding of the

discipline, demands, nuance, as well as joy, of theatre-making, enabling me to approach it both artistically and with knowledge of the practical and logistical demands of live performance production.

SLT volunteering

Between September 2021 – April 2022 I supported with SLT publicity and marketing; producing the fortnightly newsletter, updating the website with news stories and supporting marketing through social media. I also supported in recruiting and training further volunteers to support this work.

Between September 2022 – December 2023 I covered and arranged shifts and volunteers for the SLT Feast stall every month, promoting productions, membership, and introducing innovations such as lucky dip and prize draw to increase sign-ups to the SLT mailing list – which proved very effective, significantly increasing sign-ups at the stall each month.

My experience volunteering with SLT in the last few years shows my commitment to South London Theatre, my initiative and proactivity to leading and supporting improvements to benefit the theatre and increase engagement.

Work

At King's College London, I manage a team responsible for delivering online content and communications for students. My role involves setting strategic goals and ensuring that messaging is engaging, accurate, and aligned with the organization's objectives. I also oversee people management, focusing on inclusive communication, managing feedback, and leading change.

Over the past two years, I've successfully built a new team, established processes, and contributed to the development of a new student content strategy. This work has influenced not just my team but also hundreds of internal stakeholders, showcasing my ability to lead change, drive innovation, and to set and work within strategic frameworks.

Gareth Milton

Why are you interested in the role of Director and Trustee?

I have been involved in SLT since 2017, starting by taking Box Office and Front of House Shifts. I took over the management of the Box Office in January 2018. Following that, I became a director by virtue of the new role of House Manager in 2020, which I helped to shape as I could see the need for proper representation for the House teams. I enjoy seeing the wonderful shows that SLT produces, but I know that I add best value behind the scenes. I have taken a strong interest in the non-theatrical income streams that help us maintain the building, and I know that there is more that can be done. If I am successful in obtaining the role I will be looking to hand over the day to day responsibilities of running the box office and the house teams to other volunteers in the team, in order to free up time to get closer to the other functions covered by this large role.

Relevant experience

My background is in project and programme management, and this is a skill set that I have successfully utilised to bring about change for SLTC. An example of this is working with the website team to successfully introduce the new back-end for the website, which is simpler for people to use. I enjoy planning and analysis, and whilst these skills are by no means unique in SLTC, I think it is rare for someone to want to volunteer to do them.

In my past I have successfully managed projects for both regulatory change, website launches, organisational and structural changes, including the communication and process changes that were generated as a result.

Christopher Stooke

Why are you interested in the role of Director and Trustee?

I first joined SLTC in the late 1970's and have enjoyed all of my involvement with the theatre during both periods of my membership. I have been co-opted as the financial director (and Company Secretary) of SLTC since 2015, taking over from Geoff Lill. I have, more recently, also taken over as chair of the BPT. I feel that I have made a good contribution as a director and trustee hitherto, particularly in negotiating SLTC's arrangements with Stanley Halls, managing all aspects of the finances and, most recently, helping to initiate the working group which has come up with the proposed changes to governance. I should like to help to put these changes into practice and to set up a durable and fit for purpose governance structure for the future.

Relevant Experience

I have been a trustee and treasurer of two charities, King's College Hospital Charity (2016-2023) and Royal School of Needlework (2011-2018). I also have board level experience of a NHS Foundation Trust (King's College Hospital (2011-2020)) and a number of commercial companies including Atrium Underwriters Ltd where I have been Non-Executive Chairman since 2021. I am a Chartered Accountant with reporting, audit, accounting and investigation experience.

Shree Ziradkar

Why are you interested in the role of Director and Trustee?

I moved to Streatham in August 2023 and discovered SLT in November. I have enjoyed my time as a member, performing in two shows, auditioning for others, making new friends and volunteering at the bar. I am interested in the role of director and trustee because, given my skillset, it strikes me as a great way to give back to the community that has welcomed me so warmly.

Relevant Experience

I am a qualified solicitor in England and Wales. I am employed by the Government Legal Department and I advise central government on public procurement procedures, goods and services contracts, contractual disputes and other commercial and corporate matters. I am accustomed to scrutinising financial and governance documents as part of my work and I am familiar with compliance obligations under charity law. I am confident that I can help ensure SLT pursues its charitable objectives and maintains financial stability.

I also have some experience with theatre management on a small scale. For two years before moving to London, I served as treasurer for my university theatre society, which had a membership of around 100 people and an annual turnover of £15,000. I set realistic goals and a clear strategic direction for the society, which put it in a good position to handle the challenges of the pandemic.

Finally, as a new SLT member who has performed in two shows and volunteered at the bar, I hope I can bring some fresh perspective to Board discussions.